

II. Purpose, Principles, and Process

The planning process for the Isleta Boulevard and Village Centers Sector Development Plan was a community-based model that sought out a wide variety of community opinions, respected local knowledge, and was based upon information exchange rather than a top-down approach. This chapter covers the Plan Purpose, Planning Principles, and Community Planning Process.

A. PLAN PURPOSE

As expressed by community members, Isleta Boulevard is facing increasing development that could either enrich the community's valued assets or alter its character forever. The urgent planning challenges along the roadway are found in its transition from a rich agricultural corridor into an area losing its traditional agricultural and semi-rural character, facing growing traffic congestion, experiencing deficient amenities such as public spaces, parks, and trails, and in need of new economic opportunities related to small-scale business and agriculture.

In the 2001 Southwest Area Plan (SWAP), Policy 8.a calls for the creation of an Isleta Boulevard Sector Plan that would protect, rehabilitate, restore, and enhance the historic, cultural, and economic significance of the Isleta corridor. According to the SWAP, a sector plan for the Isleta corridor was needed in order to:

- Protect the visual qualities that reflect the history and heritage of Isleta Boulevard
- Provide guidance to developers, design professionals, and property owners for new development, streetscape, and redevelopment projects
- Examine existing and future land uses in relation to economic development opportunities
- Examine existing and future land uses in relation to the revitalization of the adjacent properties and the efficient functioning of Isleta Boulevard
- Develop incentives to encourage commercial and mixed-use development for this area.



2/16/04 CAC Meeting

This sector plan strives to meet each of the above county-prescribed goals for the plan, but it also responds with care to another set of goals: the articulated visions of community residents. The community-based planning process that led to the publication of this plan was explicitly designed to extract the hopes and desires of residents for their community and then to match those desires with policy language. Therefore, two additional fundamental purpose of this sector plan are to:

- Reaffirm community visions for the Isleta corridor
- Help enact those visions with corresponding policy language for Isleta Boulevard

"We want a plan with zoning, a plan with *teeth*," residents expressed throughout the planning process.

The Isleta Boulevard and Village Centers Sector Development Plan can be used by local residents, property owners, community groups, Bernalillo County elected and appointed officials, and County staff as the official guide for future development along Isleta Boulevard. This plan can be viewed as an overall planning strategy that builds upon the historic, cultural, and economic significance of the Isleta corridor while responding to the visions expressed by local residents in the year-long planning process.

B. PLANNING PRINCIPLES

Throughout the planning process for the Isleta Boulevard and Village Centers Sector Development Plan, the planning team worked toward fulfilling two important goals: meeting the scope of services set out by the County Planning Department and honoring the community visions articulated throughout the planning process. Thus, the sector plan is both a technical document and a testimony of community visions. It is also an expression of the underlying planning principles that inform this sector plan:

- **Building on the past to plan for the future.** A deep respect for the history of the South Valley, the local culture, and the communities that have lived here for hundreds of years fundamentally impacts every aspect of this plan. Planning for the future of the Isleta corridor is impossible without valuing the history and culture of this community, one that is rooted in a rich heritage of agriculture and small business.
- **Isleta Boulevard is more than just a road.** The sector plan treats Isleta Boulevard as a community roadway that serves as the heart of the South Valley – not just a road that carries motor vehicles. The Isleta corridor has served residents for centuries as a trade route, an economic corridor, a meeting place, and a home and is a living part of the community. This plan respects it as such.
- **Do development right.** The sector plan is an opportunity for residents to define the kind of development they want in their community, not an attempt to stop development from occurring. There is broad consensus among a variety of stakeholders that Isleta Boulevard is in need of infrastructure improvements, new service and retail opportunities, additional economic activity, and more jobs for local residents. This plan attempts to facilitate that provision in a way that doesn't overdevelop the community, pave over viable agricultural land, and destroy the community's unique sense of place. Rather, development could – and should – be done in a way that continues Isleta Boulevard's tradition as a vibrant corridor that serves local needs.



10/12/04 CAC Meeting/Mapping Exercise



5/4/05 CAC Meeting

C. COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS

For the Isleta Boulevard and Village Centers Sector Development Plan, the planning team embarked upon a comprehensive community participation process that ensured all residents were informed about the sector plan and invited to jump into the process at any time. All residents were treated with respect and valued for what they could add to the process, and had ample access and opportunity to help shape the development of the sector plan.

The Resource Center for Raza Planning (RCRP) was committed to a public participation process that would provide an open venue for expressing community values, addressing community concerns and questions, and providing an exchange of knowledge and information. The perspectives of community members were gathered through public meetings, Community Advisory Committee meetings, one-on-one meetings, mapping exercises, and a survey.



1/19/02 CAC Meeting

Goals of the Public Participation Process

The public participation process for the Isleta Boulevard and Village Centers Sector Development Plan included the following goals:

- Developing a process to help residents express their values about their community
- Soliciting and documenting community concerns, issues, and knowledge
- Establishing forums to exchange education and information
- Analyzing community input to develop language for the sector plan



2/2/05 CAC Meeting

Methods for Maximum Outreach

RCRP used a variety of techniques in order to provide maximum outreach to the public. These techniques included:

- Holding community-wide public meetings
- Establishing a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) consisting of anyone who attended any sector plan meeting and open to new residents at any time
- Identifying and recruiting a variety of stakeholders into the CAC process, including individuals from the community and technical experts
- Providing a forum for information exchange, including regularly scheduled CAC meetings and update newsletters mailed to South Valley residents

RCRP routinely communicated with the residents of the South Valley who would be most impacted by the project through the following methods:

- Postcard reminders of meetings
- Newsletters

- Personal telephone calls before each meeting
- Bernalillo County Website
- News releases
- *Albuquerque Journal* articles and announcements
- *South Valley Ink* articles and announcements
- Public Meetings
- CAC Meetings
- Survey
- Visioning Exercises
- Mapping Exercises



10/12/04 CAC Meeting/Mapping Exercise

Sector Plan Community Meetings

The community participation process for the Isleta Boulevard and Village Centers Sector Development Plan was based upon valuing the opinions of local residents and regularly exchanging information regarding the sector plan. The planning process involved two types of meetings: public meetings, in which mailings were sent to almost 3,000 households who live within a quarter-mile of Isleta Boulevard to target new participants, and Community Advisory Council meetings, in which mailings were sent to participants who attended any previous sector plan meeting. Regardless of how meeting notices were mailed out, every sector plan community meeting was open to the public and advertised on the Bernalillo County website with occasional announcements and articles in newspapers.



2/16/05 CAC Meeting

Every sector plan community meeting was held in the Harrison Middle School cafeteria at 6:30 p.m. and were typically attended by 40 people. Food was integral to the community meetings. At each meeting refreshments were provided by RCRP. For several meetings, potlucks were organized where everyone brought food to share. Some community participants even brought in treats of their own regularly, like homemade gingersnap cookies.

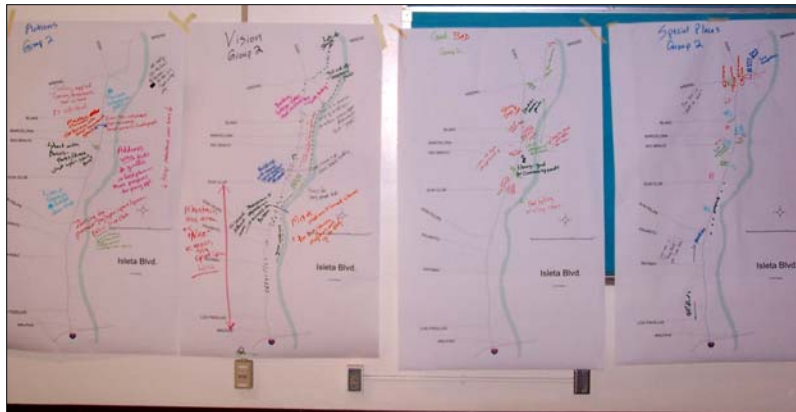
The sector plan public participation process fell into two phases. During **Phase 1: Information Gathering and Visioning** (September–December, 2004), the planning team led meeting participants through a survey on visions for Isleta Boulevard, several visioning exercises, and a mapping exercise in which residents mapped their likes/dislikes about Isleta along with their visions for the roadway. One public meeting and three CAC meetings were held during this process.

- September 21, 2004: Introducing the Isleta Boulevard sector planning process to the community and administering a survey to meeting participants (*Public*)
- October 12, 2004: Mapping exercise (*CAC*)
- November 9, 2004: Sector plan boundaries discussion (*CAC*)
- November 30, 2004: Guidelines, Incentives and Regulations discussion (*CAC*)

In the second phase of the public participation process, the planning team and the meeting participants built upon the community's articulated visions to develop policies for the Isleta corridor. In **Phase 2: Policymaking** (January–June, 2005), there were two public meetings and seven CAC meetings (roughly every other Wednesday).

- January 19, 2005: *Welcome Back! Potluck*. Updating the public on the progress of the Isleta Boulevard sector plan and inviting new participants. (*Public*)
- February 2, 2005: Agriculture/Open Space Issues (*CAC*)
- February 16, 2005: Agriculture/Open Space Policy Language (*CAC*)
- March 2, 2005: Infrastructure/Amenities and Village Centers Introduction (*CAC*)
- March 16, 2005: Infrastructure/Amenities and Traffic Flow Policy Language (*CAC*)
- April 6, 2005: Economic Development Issues (*CAC*)
- April 20, 2005: Village Centers Issues (*CAC*)
- May 4, 2005: Village Centers and Sense of Place Policy Language (*CAC*)
- May 23, 2005: Village Centers and Sense of Place Policy Language (*CAC*)
- June 15, 2005: *We Did It! Potluck*. Community review of the draft sector plan (*Public*)

Phase 2 was kicked off with a potluck and storytelling meeting, where community members shared a meal and told stories about the corridor: growing up there, having family there for centuries, or moving there because of its uniqueness. Throughout the spring, sector plan community meetings often involved participants and the planning team spending time mingling and chatting well after the meetings were adjourned.



Community Visioning Maps, 10/12/04

When talking through policy for the Isleta corridor, discussions were respectful and debate was lively; community participants were invited to share their knowledge about related topics and feedback was requested for every item the planning team presented. Meetings typically involved a presentation and facilitated discussion where residents were given several handouts with policy options to consider. Often, the planning team would come back at the next meeting with answers to previous questions and with adjustments to previously presented policy options based on community feedback. Though disagreements exist within the community, the tone of the discussion was collaborative and constructive throughout the planning process.